

THE  
**DANGER**  
Of deferring  
**Repentance,**

Discovered

By that reverend  
and faithfull Mini-  
ster of the worde.

*William Fenner.*

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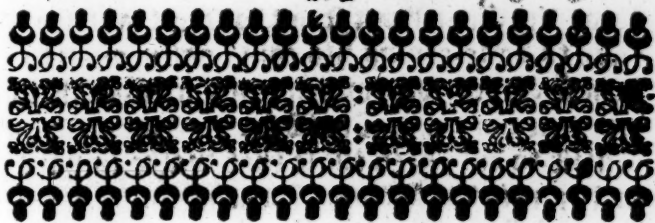


William Fenner Rector of Rochford B.D. Somtime  
Fellow of Pembroke Hall. Aetatis 45 A 1648

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# A SERMON of Mr. William

Fenners at Maidstone, September.

frances <sup>25</sup> <sup>1629.</sup> ~~williams~~ *has bank*

## PROVERBES. I. 28.

Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer: they shall seek me early, but they shall not finde me.

Here is a good English Proverbe amongst us, that he that neglectes the occasion, the occasion will neglect him. Solomon wisely begins his Proverbs with it: for he bringeth in the Wisdome of his Father in these five particulars: first, making a generall Proclamation in the 20. verse, Wisdome crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets. He compareth God unto a cryer that goeth up and

Down the Citie from Street to Street, and from  
 Doore to Doore, crying his commodity, even the  
 richest y<sup>e</sup> ever was, which is a Christ, a Christ  
 for redemption, a Christ for sanctification, a  
 Christ to enlighten those that walke in dark-  
 nesse and to the shadow of death. Ho, every one  
 that thirsteth, here is a Christ for you.

Secondly, here is a mercifull reprehension,  
 in y<sup>e</sup> 22. verse, O ye foolish, how long will you  
 love foolishnesse, and you scornors take pleasure  
 in scorning? ~~Foolish~~ indeed to be without Christ  
~~foolish to be without grace, foolish to chafe~~ a-  
 way our souls for sin. How long yee scornors  
 will you take pleasure in scorning: will you still  
 persist in your wickedness, & never have done  
 with your sins: will you never turne back a-  
 gaine, but damne your souls for ever? O yee  
 foolish, how long will you love foolishnesse?

Thirdly, here is a gracious exhortation in y<sup>e</sup>  
 23 verse: Turne you at my correction: lo, I wil  
 poure out my mind unto you, and make you to  
 understand my words. As if he should say, Do  
 you not see how you are going a pace to confu-  
 sion: and that the way you take, leadeth unto  
 destruction: turne ye therefore, turn ye back a-  
 gain, for there is a Christ behind you, O turn ye,  
 for if ye go on in your sins, you perish for ever.

Fourthly, here is a yearning promise made  
 unto the world, in the end of the 23. verse, Lo,

I will poure out my spirit upon you, and cause you to understand my words. As if he should say, returne back againe with me, & you shall have better welcom then you can possibly have if you go on in your sins, the devill will never let you gain so much by your living in your lust as you shall do by repentance for them, & forsaking of them. For behold I will poure out my spirit upon you, whereby you shall be farre greater gainers, then you shall be by your sins.

Firstly, here is a grievous threatening against the world, even all those that have loptered out the day of grace. As time and tide waits for no man, no more doth the day of grace: Because I have called, and you refused; I have exhorted, but you have not regarded; I have denounced judgments against you for your sins, but you have hardened your hearts; now a day of woe and miserie shall come upon you, a time of vengeance and desolation shall over take you: there will a day come wherein there will be weeping, and crying. Mercie (Lord) mercie, but I tell you before-hand what you shall trust to: let this be your lesson, now I call, & you will not hear; now I stretch out my hands, but you will not regard: you shall seek me eraly, but you shall not find me: and shall cry, but you shall not be heard.

The words are a thunderclap against all those that procrastinate their repentance, and returning home unto God. Wherein note, first, the parties themselves that do prolong this time of grace, they: that is, they who when God calls on them, will not heare; when God invites them by his mercies, patience, & forbearance, by his Ministers & servants, by his corrections & judgements, by all faire means, & soft means, yet withstand y<sup>e</sup> means of grace: they are the men, they shall call, but God will not answer.

Secondly, here is there seeking after God; they shall call upon me.

Thirdly, here is their earnest & diligent seeking unto God; they shall not only call, but seek to, and not onely seek, but seek as to labour to find: nay they shall seek me early, even strive to go about it with all hast, and strive to repentance, but they shall not find me.

Fourthly, here is the unseasonableness of the time of their seeking, then; that is a demonstrative, then: even a time which y<sup>e</sup> Lord points at: as if he should say, you shall see then these men will be of an other mind, then they will be glad to be converted, then they will be glad to come out of their sins, then they will be glad to get grace & seek reconciliation with God: but alas! they saw not this then, but God foresaw it

deferring Repentance.

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it well enough, then shall they call but I will not answer, they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me.

Lastly, here is the frustration of their hopes, which hath two things in it. First, in regard of their selves, in regard of the flaw of their seeking, it being not aright. Secondly, in regard of the justice of God, who rewards every man according to his works. but I will not hear them. Whence observe this point of Doctrine.

DOCTRINE. .I.

These that will not heare God when he calleth them, God will not hear them when they call upon him. Those that will not heare the Lord when he calleth upon them by the ministry of his Word, and voice of his Spirit, the Lord will not heare them, when in their misery they call upon him.

Thus the Lord dealt with the people in Ezekiels dayes, the Lord called them to repentance and obedience: but when they stood out, & neglected the opportunity of grace, and seasons of conversion, see how God deales with them: though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet I will not heare them (saith the Lord,) When men have gone beyond the time of Gods mercy, & out-ruled y<sup>e</sup> time of Gods forbearance & will

will not return, & Lord sets it down with him  
 selfe, that his wrath shall returne upon them,  
 he will no longer forbear: they had a time  
 wherein & Lord did pittie them, & offered grac  
 and mercy unto them, but they neglecting this  
 season, and withstanding this proffer of grace  
 God resolves with himselfe they shall never  
 have it againe. There was a time wherein  
 God did pittie them, but now he will not pity  
 them any more; twenty five yers he called un-  
 to them, and sought to bring them home: but  
 because they stood out and refused, the Lord  
 saith; I will love Ephraim no more.

Beloved, there is a double day, a white day  
 and a black day; there is a day of salvation,  
 Isa. 49. 9. this is the day in which & Lord said  
 to the prisoners, Come forth: and to those  
 that lie in their sins, repent and beleeve. Now  
 if any man will come forth and humble his  
 soule before & Lord, let him come & welcome,  
 for it is a day of salvation. But there is ano-  
 ther day of damnation, which is a darke day, a  
 black & a duskie day, wherein & Lord will visite  
 the sins of the world, and revenge the quarrell  
 of his Covenant. Hos. 9. 7. The day of vilitati-  
 on is come, yea the day of recompence, the peo-  
 ple shall know it; the Prophet is a foole, and the  
 spirituall man is mad. Beloved, we are scoldes  
 and all & spirituall men under heaven are mad  
 that

that lay not this day to heart. For the day of the Lord is a day of visitation, & all the world shall rue it, though now men sleepe in security. If once mercy be rejected, and God turn away his eare from a man, then grace shall be no more the word of life shall for ever be shut up against him: and when once this day comes, he hath lost his owne peace, and deprived himselfe of eternall happinesse.

Now there are three Reasons of this point; the first is the law of retaliation, of rendering like for like, which is y<sup>e</sup> justest law that can be made with man, for to give unto every man according to his works, to make him take such as he brings, (as the heathen call it) to give a man quid pro quo. Now if God call upon thee, and thou wilt not heare; it is righteousness with God, yea equity with God (that is more) that when y<sup>e</sup> callest on him, he should not hear thee for thus runs the tenor of Gods Word, Prov. 28.9. He that turns away his eare from hearing the Law, even his prayer shall be abominable. He that turns away his eare from Gods Law, God will turne away his eare from his prayer. He that turns it is spoken in the present tense, that is, he that now turns away his eare, his prayer shall be abominable (in the future tense) y<sup>e</sup> is, the Lord marks what matter



or seruaunt, what father or mother, what husband or wife, what man or woman it is, y turns away the eare of his head, or the eare of his heart, from hearing his will, and obeying of his Commandements, the Lord takes speciall notice of it, & sets it downe in his Calender, & records it in his Memoriall; keeping a strict account thereof: as if God should say, Well, is it so? I now call, and will not this man or that woman answer? Do I now stretch out my hands, and will not they take care to obey me? Well: let them alone (saith God) there is a day comming that I shalbe a hearing of them: times of sorrow and misery will take hold of them, and then they in their afflictions will cry unto me, but I will not heare, they will beg for mercy, but I will not regard: they will seek me early, but they shall not find me.

It was on of the Articles of high Treason brought in against Cardinall wolsey, that he had the Por, and a stinking breath and yet durst come into y Kings presence: So it will be an article against thee of high treason before the King of heaben, if thou come into his presence with the stinking breath of thy sins, liuing in thy lusts, and wallowing in thy filthinesse; all thy Prayers are but as so many stinking breaths in y nostrils of the Lord, & every duty y thou performest unto the Lord shall be



as so many articles of high treason against thee, for to condemn thee, because thou liest in Rebellion, and a traitor against God.

His prayer shall be abominable, he doth not say I will turn away mine eare from hearing his prayer, which turns away his eare from hearing my Law, (that is the true exposition of the words) no, like for like is sometimes injustice, for if a man should strike a Magistrate a box on the eare, it were not justice for him to give him another: for it is a greater sin to strike a Magistrate, then any other common person, & therefore a greater Punishment the Law requireth. So God doth not say he will turne away his eare from hearing his prayer, but will serve him in a worse kind, he will count it abominable yea abomination (in the abstract) it shall be loathsome, yea loathsomnesse it selfe in the worst manner. Gal. 6. As a man soweth. so shall he reap; if thou sow sparingly, thou shalt reap sparingly; if thou sow a dull eare to Gods Word, thou shalt reap a dull eare from God to thy prayer: For God will reward every man according to his workes.

Secondly, because of the time of Gods attributes: both mercy and justice have their season in this life; and when mercy hath acted her part, then cometh justice upon the stage, and acteth her part: so that God will have his attributes

attributes manifested to all the sons of men;  
 yea to the face of y<sup>e</sup> whole world. There is no  
 Market, nor f<sup>r</sup>ay-day y<sup>e</sup> lasteth alwaies: if the  
 Countrey will not come in, y<sup>e</sup> Trabelsmen will  
 put up their Wares, and be gone: but if they  
 come in time, they may have a pennyworth o-  
 therwise if they come too late, they will have  
 none. For y<sup>e</sup> Merchant will not alwaies dwell  
 in Tents, but away he goeth, and will not stay  
 for them. Beloved, Gods standing is now open,  
 and his Shop is set wide unto y<sup>e</sup> sons of men;  
 if men will not come in, cheapen and buy with-  
 out money, whiles God offers his Wares, he  
 will put them up and be gone. For the Mer-  
 chant will not lose his Wares, which he should  
 do, if he should alwaies remaine in the open  
 Aire with them; if he alwaies continue in the  
 fieldes expecting Customers, his Wares would  
 spoile and rot. So it is with God, how  
 many sweet Counsels doth he lose: how ma-  
 ny sweet Exortations: how many blessed  
 Sermons & holy Sacrements, and Sabbathes,  
 doth he lose: how many checks of Conscience:  
 how many days of Grace and motions of his  
 Spirit have been squandered away in vaine:  
 do you thinke that God will lose all these, and  
 let them rot upon y<sup>e</sup> stall, with staying for you:  
 No, no, the day of grace & mercy will have an  
 end: and then y<sup>e</sup> day of wrath and vengeance  
 will

will step up, To day if ye will heare his voice,  
then harden not your hearts: then they hard-  
ned their hearts, & would not be led by Gods  
mercies to forsake their sinns; Therefore he  
sweare in his wrath that they should never en-  
ter into his rest. If it be so with you as it was  
with Israel in the Wilderness, in the day of  
temptation you doe not know but y your sinns  
may now begin to pluck vengeance upon you.  
I tell you, if you harden your hearts this day,  
you do not know but this very day y Lord may  
clap an Oath upon your heads, that you shall  
never enter into his rest. For one & the self-  
same occasion last not a waies: as every day  
is not a Market day, nor every week in the  
yeare a faire week, nor every season in y year  
a time of Spring or harvest, so every day of a  
mans life may not claime to be y day of grace  
Therefore if a man lose-lost it now he fore-  
seeth his own happinesse, and putteth off his  
own peace for ever.

Excellent is that annotation of Gregory on  
Job. 27. 9. will God heare his cry when trou-  
ble cometh upon him. Beloved, now Gods  
patience is troubled, wilt not y repent? Now  
Gods Spirit is troubled, wilt not thou cry?  
Now Gods justice is troubled, wilt not thou  
releat. Now Gods wrath is troubled, wilt thou  
refuse to hearken? will God heare his cry? He  
speareth

speakeeth interrogatiuely, as if he should say: Art thou so mad, so vaine, so foolish, to promise to thy selfe being an hypocrite, that God will heare thy prayer? Oh no, then justice cometh to take place.

Thirdly, it is Gods use to do so in other things, even upon the contempt of temporall blessings; and therefore much more in matters of grace & salvation. Thus God promised to giue Israel the land of Canaan, Numb. 12. 22. but the text saith, they tempted God ten times that is (as some Expositors expound) many times, or (as others) ten seuerall times. But whateuer the meaning of the text be, certainly it was very many times, so long till at last, he swore in his wrath, that they should never enter into his rest, Beloved, though there be many a hot swearer & regards not an oath: yet certainly if the Lord swear we may beleue him; the word of God is as strong as oaths: if he say it upon his word, we are bound to beleue it: how much more then, when he confirms it with an oath. Therefore if the Lord swear thou shalt not, how darest thou: how canst thou hope or think ever to enter into his rest. This was almost fourtie yeeres before he died, that the Lord made this oath against them: and God knoweth how many thousands of them fell short, not only of the Land of Canaan but also of the Kingdom

Kingdome of heaven.

So God took Ismael an hundred and seventeen yeers before he died : twenty yeares God offered him grace and repentance, but he would not take warning ; a mocker he was , and a mocker he would be, for he mocked Isaac when he was a child six yeares old ; and no meanes would reclaim him, before he heard the voice, Cast out the bond woman and her sonne : Out with him, (saith God) for he shall never be heire with my sonne : this was an hundred and seventeen yeares before Ismaels death.

And so God took Saul, five and thirty, or six and thirty yeares before he died, according to Josephus Chronology, ( if it be true ; ) howsoever, he took him divers yeares before his death : for so the Scripture makes it plaine 1 Sam. 15. 29. The strenght of Israel will not lie nor repent; for he is not a man that he should repent. Therefore because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord also hath rejected thee from being a King. And doe not think that thou by thy prayers, and crying God mercy, canst ever alter him : for his counsell is immutable, and he is strong in his decree, and cannot change. Hetherto Grace and Mercy have been offered thee, which if thou hadst imbraced, thou mightest have found Mercy from the Lord, and the King-

some should have been established and confirmed into thee; but now it is too late: for the strength of Israel cannot lie.

God took Eſau fiftie yeares before his death: for so long he lived, after he sought the blessing with teares: but he was a hunting when God was calling: he was following his prophainenesse when God was wotting him to Repentance. At last when he called for Repentance, and sought it earnestly, yea his Soule was carefull for to get it; yet he could never obtaine it, though he sought it earnestly with teares fiftie yeares before he died.

Now if the Lord so severely punish contempt of temporall blessings, O how will he punish the contempt of proffers of Grace and Salvation! I tell you, God will be more strict in revenging of this sinne, then of any other sinne: he will come with Partiall law against all those that contemne his Gospell, Ioh. 3. 18. He that belceiveth not, is condemned already,

Doth Christ preach repentance and salvation, and the Kingdome of God; and wilt thou not repent and beleve? Partiall Law (beloved) martiall Law, hang him up; for he is condemned already. Even like a Souldier that rebels against his Generall, and forsake his Colours, they doe not cast him into prison, and stay for the Assizes or Sessions, but give him

him Mattiall Law, even hang him up : So if the Lord sound his Gospell in thine ears, and offers thee conditions of peace, knocking at the doore of thy heart by his Spirit ; and thou refuse to open to him thou art condemned already : for the strenght of Israel cannot lie, nor repent. Oh therefore take heed now whiles his word sounds in thine ears, While his Spirit secretly whispers in thy heart to thee, open to him, for else thou art condemned for ever.

Take notice then, that God doth commonly give men a day, and no man or Angel doth know how long this day lasteth. To some it lasteth to their last gasp ; to some, to their old age ; and to some it is cut off in their childhood. God gave the Angels a day, the which because they neglected, they are reserved in chains of darknesse untill the great judgement day. God gave Cain a day, Gen. 4. During all the time of this day, though Cain sinned againe and againe, and went on in his sinnes a great while, yet heard nothing but a still voice, If thou doe well Cain, shalt thou not be accepted? but if thou dost ill, sinne lieth at the doore, But when no means will prevaile, but Cain will go on adding sin to sin, and murder unto all the rest of his sinnes, and so let go the season of mercy, the Lord tells him



from heaven, that the day of grace is past, the gate of mercy is shut against thee: for thou art now accursed from the earth. As if the Lord should say; Before I gave thee a day of salvation, and offered thee mercie, but thou wouldest not accept of it; but now I have clapt a curse upon thy soule, that thou shalt never claw it off. So God gave Niniveh a day to repent, Ionnah 3. Yet fourty dayes and Niniveh shall be destroyed. God gave the Fig-tree a day, even three years, before he would have it cut down. God gave the old world a day of an hundred and twenty years; during this time God sent unto them Noah, a Preacher of Righteousnesse, to call upon them to repent, and so set it down also, that his Spirit shall not alwaies strive with man, but his time shall be an hundred and twenty yeares: yet one writs that the Lord cut off twenty of the hundred and twenty yeares, because of their iniquities which were so grievous, and provoked him so much, that they hastened him to come before he would have done. In all this space if they had Repented, they should have found Mercy from the Lord: but when this time was gone and the day of grace was out, the deluge came in upon them, and God by his judgements overthrew the whole World.

Object. You may aske me when this day  
or



or season of grace doth end, or cease.

Ans<sup>r</sup>. I answer, that neither men nor Angels can tell; but this I say, it may be yet this day of grace lasteth unto thee; now it may be God speaketh to thy soul, now it may be God warms thy heart, and gives thee good purposes and resolutions: now it may be the Lord Jesus passeth by thee in a good thought and desire, lay hold on it; for thy day may cease this very night, for ought thou knowest. Luke 17. 22. The time shall come (saith Christ) when you shall desire to see one of the dayes of the Sonne of man, and shall not see it. Now is the day of Christ upon you, now is Christ offering and preaching himselfe to you; but if you let this day passe thou maist desire to have one of the drops of that Blood that hath been offered to thee, and yet never have it: thou maist desire to feelee one rap of that Spirit that hath knockt at thy heart, and yet goe without it, thou maist intreat for one dram of that mercy that hath been offered, and thou hast rejected, but it shall never be granted to thee: God may clap that fearefull sentence upon thee, Now henceforth never grow fruit more on thee. never Repentance come into thy heart more. If now thou wilt not repent and be converted, the Lord may set it down in his decree from this day forward,

that thou maist fumble about thy finnes, but shalt never get victory over them : thou maist ever be mourning for thy corruptions, but never mourne aright for them ; thou maist blunder about Repentance, but never doe the worke.

Ezekiel 24. 23. You shall not mourne nor weepe, but you shall pine away for your iniquities, and mourne one towards another. There is many a soule for contemning of God, and not taking up Repentance while they may have it, this plague of God is come upon them, that they are ever repenting, and are never able to Repent, ever poring upon their finnes, but never able to come out of them : they pray and pray against them, but their prayers moulder away under them : for they shall pine away for their iniquities. What is the reason? He sheweth in the 13. verse: Because I would have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged any more. Because I gave thee line upon line, precept upon precept, motion upon motion, Sacrament upon Sacrament, Sabbath upon Sabbath, and Ordinance upon Ordinance, because I used all faire means and soule means; I awaked thy conscience and stirred up the motions of Grace in thee; but because I would have cleansed thee, and thou wast not cleansed,

thou

thou shalt never be cleansed. A fearful sentence it is, if mens hearts were soundly opened to consider rightly of it.

And as there is a Personall day, so there is a Nationall day; if the Nation turne unto God during that time, then that Nation shall find mercy; but if they neglect that day, then God will hide those things from their eyes that belong to their peace, as Christ saith of Ierusalem, Luke 19. 42. O Ierusalem! if that thou hadst known in this thy day, the things that did belong to thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes: in this thy day; if thou hadst known it during that day it had been happy for thee; but now the day of grace is gone, the Lord hath concealed it from thee, and thou shalt never perceive it more.

Some mens day of grace God endeth e-  
den in their very child-hood; therefore if there be any little ones, any Children here in this congregation, that are of age to know what belongs to an exortation, to them I spake, that they take heed how they rebell against the commandement of a Father or a Mother, or Master, against the teaching of Gods word, for though you be children, yet God may inflict judgments upon your heads; for not only the day of grace, but also the day of life may be cut off from children, as 2 Kings

2. 24. Four and twenty children were torne in pieces for mocking the Lords Prophet. Some mens day of grace is not shut up untill their youth; some not untill their old age. some not untill they are a dying; and if they refuse then, they are like, yea sure to perish for ever; I know the day of grace may have severall returns, but at last Gods Exchequer will be finally shut up.

Object. May not a man be called at the eleventh or twelfth houre of the day? The day of grace lasteth alwayes: and doth not the Apostle call the day of life, the day of grace? 2 Cor. 6. 2.

Ans. It is true, the Lord calleth men at the eleventh & twelfth houre; but yet looke and you shall see in the twentieth of Matthew, that they were not called at the first houre, nor at the second nor third houre, nor at the first and ninth houre, he doth not say he found the same men that he found at the first, and third, sixth and ninth houres, but he saw others standing idle: So those that were called at the first houre, came in at the first houre; and they that were called at the third houre, came in at the third houre; and they that were called at the sixth and ninth houre, came in at y<sup>e</sup> sixth

sixth and ninth houre. Well, doth God call thee in thy childhood, in thy youth, or in thy middle age; now at the first or sixth, or ninth houre, now come in and labour in Gods vineyard, and work out your salvation with feare and trembling, and make use of the season of grace; now whilst it is upon you: for if thou be called at the first houre, the first is for another, and not for thee; if thou be called the sixth houre, the ninth houre is for others and not for thee; if thou be called the ninth houre, the eleventh houre is for others & not for thee; The text saith, He came & found others standing idle in the market place, and said unto them, Why stand ye here idle? and they say unto him, no man hath hired us; as if they should say, We never had any means of salvation, we have had no Ministers to preach unto us; but now God calls upon thee to come in, this is thy houre, look unto it. If God call thee, see thou come in, whether it be at the first or third houre, at the sixth or ninth houre, lest the Lord in his wrath clap hardnesse of heart upon thy soule.

Object. But you will say, that the day of life, and the day of grace are paralleld, and likened one to another; and therefore there is hope so long as a man remains in the congregation of the living.

Ans.w.

Ans<sup>r</sup>, I answer, it is true indeed, that the day of grace lasteth as long as the day of life,  
 1. In regard of others; for others are so to esteeme of it; the Minister is to look to his people, as to a people to be converted as long as they live.

2 In regard of a mans own selfe, he is so bound to believe; for the commandment of faith standeth in force on a man, so long as he liveth and therefore infidelity and despaire cease not to be finnes, till a man is actually in Hell; when he is in hell, then they are no finnes, because then he is not commanded to believe, but are part of the punishment of the damned; but whilst a man lives it is a sin, for men are now bound to lay hold upon Christ and to believe, at what houre of their life soever.

3. It may be said to last all a mans life long, because it is bounded within the compasse of life; for no man hath a day of grace after this life.

But what is the meaning of all those Scriptures which shew how God doth deliver up men unto the Spirit of guidinesse, and unto the Spirit of slumber? And what means the hardening of mens hearts, & searing of mens consciences, but only to shew that the day of grace may end unto a particular man, ten,  
 twenty

twenty, thirty, nay forty yeares before his death;

1. Because God may harden a mans heart, Jerem, 13. 10. and deale with them as with Israel in the Rock, so shut up their hearts that they shall never melt at any Sermon, never be wrought upon by any judgment, God having closed them up in a rocky heart, that he saith of them. Can the blackmore change his skin, or the Leopard his sports? then may they do good that are accustomed to do evill. The blacknesse of the blackmore is only in the outside of the skin, yet all the art under the heavens cannot blot it out: So if once hardnesse possesse thy soule, all the preaching of the Ministers, and all the means of grace in the world, can never bring it unto that frame, and temper, as to make it melt under the hand of God; I tell thee, thou that usest to come unto Sermons day after day, and refusest to repent, living still in thy sinns, there is no hammer nor beetle in the world more hard then thy heart: as those men and women that sit under the preaching of the word, and heare y<sup>e</sup> doctrine of life, like raine from above, beating and knocking on their consciences, and on their hearts, to awaken them out of their sinns, and yet notwithstanding will not repent at last, they prove to be deafe Adders, that stop their



their ears against the word, charme the charmer never so wisely.

2. God may feare mens consciences; Doth thy conscience tell thee thou art a luke-warming, and wilt thou not be reformed? Doth thy conscience tell thee, that thy prayers and all thy religion is rotten and unsound, and that thy Repentance is hypocriticall and nought; and that for all thy vaine hopes, thou art but a dissembler, and yet remainest in thy sinns, and wilt thou not be bettered hereby? Take heed; for that man that runs on in sinne against the voice of his owne conscience, that man sins the sinne, of Saul 1 Sam. 13. 8. God bid him stay seven dayes untill Samuel came: Saul stayes full seven dayes within one houre; at last his lust began to bawl: What? shall I stay for a Prophet thus long? Stay, sayes his conscience; Why? (sayes Saul) I wayted for him so long, even seven dayes lacking but one houre, Stay (saith God to his conscience) for the word of God bids thee stay so long; he stayed one day, and two dayes, and six dayes, and seven dayes but one houre; Stay (saith his conscience) no, he would not but I forced my selfe (saith the text) as if he should say, I hardened my heart to do it, though the word of the Lord bid me stay and not do it, yet I forced my selfe to do it: What was this.



this mans sinne: Was it his offering of sacrifice, and calling upon God by prayer: No, the Lord commands us to call upon him in time of distresse; and being commanded it was lawfull. Was it his sinne to meddle with the Priestts office: No: for he did but appoint the sacrifice, the Priest offered it. What: was it the breaking of one houres time: No: for he had sinned more against God, then so: but this was his sinne, that he went against his own conscience, when God stood in the way: when conscience stood in the way, conscience said stay, but he would not stay: God bid him stay, but he would not stay, and this is the sinne of many thousands amongst us; mens consciences tell them that they must not be drunkards, mens consciences tell them that they must not be worldlings, they must not be swearers, they must not be luke-warm professors; they must pray better then they do, and have other faith then yet they have, if ever they meane to be saved; wilt thou yet against thy conscience forcethy selfe to go on in thy sinnes from day to day, and never be reformed: take heed lest the Lord be provoked to set thy sinne upon thy head, and shut up thy heart, and conclude thy eternall destruction.

**Object.** Suppose I go on in my sins, and follow my wicked courses now; what if I seeke him hereafter, and humble my soule before him with fasting and prayer, and when I lie upon my death-bed, I send a ticket unto my Minister to pray for me, will all this do me no good?

**Ans.** Surely no, (saith God, Jerem. 15. 1.) Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my affections could not be toward this people; cast them out of my sight. Dost thou lie sick upon thy death-bed? were Samuel, Job, or Daniel, the Minister of thy Parish, and thou shouldst send thy ticket unto them, desiring them to remember thee in their prayers; if Noah stood in the Pulpit, and Job and Daniel were here before the Lord for to plead for thee, yet he would not heare thee.

**Object.** But, suppose I humble my selfe by fasting and prayer, will not God hear that?

**Ans.** No, if thou neglect the day of grace Jer. 14. 12. when they fast, I will not hear them: and when they offer oblations, I will not accept their cry: but I will consume them by the sword, by famine, and by pestilences **you may**

may set up your fastings, prayers, and humiliations, you may lament and mourne, and pine away your selves in your sins; but it is not all your prayers and fastings; it is not all your lamentation and mourning, that will do you good, so long as the counsell of the Lord is rejected. Because I called, and ye would not answer, therefore you shall call, but I will not hear, they thought that the Lords eares would alwayes be open, and that when they called the Lord would have answered, and that the dry of grace would ever remaine; but God saith, I will not hear them; they would never have sought if they thought the Lord would not heare them, but all their seeking was in vaine:

Ob. You will say at what time soever a sinner, repenteth, he shall have mercy.

An. It is true, if thou repent from the bottom of thy heart, but thou maist come with many a degree of repentance, and yet never repent whilst thou livest; if thou repent from the heart, and root out thy sins, then God will put away thy sins; but thou maist go on in repentance and calling upon God; and performing many duties of Religion, and yet be hardened; looke how much Religion will stand

stand with selfe-love, so much thou maiest have after the day of grace is gone, selfe-love may make a man flie to prayer, and run after Sermons, and go on in many holy duties, and giue over many sins; looke how farre selfe-love may dribe thee unto holy duties, so farre thou maist goe, and yet notwithstanding remaine hardened. O therefore let us not delay, nor put off the time of grace, nor let goe saluation while it may be had, then shall they call, but I will not answer: he doth not set downe when this time is; it may be this now, it may be not this seven years, it may be not till thy death.

Doct. 2. It may be this very day, even this very Sermon, this very houre may be thy day that art now in thy sins, that if thou repent not at this very one Sermon, thou neglectest eternall life for ever; lose the benefit of this Sermon at this time, and thou maist lose eternall Saluation, and never have it more. The theife that rob'd this day, how doth he know but this one robbery may bring him to the gallows? So the man that sins this day, how doth he know but that this very dayes worke may bring him to hell? Deuteronomy 32.35. To God belongs vengeance; their feet shall slide in due time. Therefore if a man sin  
against

against him; he may stand to day, and to morrow, and many dayes; but when the due time comes, even the time which God hath set, then up goes his heels, he shall slide and break his neck: thy houre-glasse runes in heaven, and thou seest not when the sand comes to the bottome; but when tis out, then down thou goest to hell for ever.

There was one resolved to kill Julius Caesar such a day; the night before, a friend sent him a letter to acquaint him with it: but being at supper, and busie, I will not look upon it now, (saith he) to morrow is a new day. The next day when he should have read his letter, he was stab'd; Whence this proverbe came in Græce To morrow is a new day. God sends thee a letter and a message from heaven to day; repent and come out of your sins, or for ever to hell; to day be converted and sanctified, or for ever be hardened. Dost thou refuse to harken to day; and puttest it off untill to morrow: it may be to morrow may be a day of Gods wrath; and then thou mayest be hardened; seared, and bound over unto the great day of Gods vengeance: to morrow God may set the decreë upon thy soul, that thou shalt never repent. Therefore if thou refuse this, thou refuseth all; for what knowest thou, but this very day may be thy day:

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The

The reason is, because Gods patience is in his owne breast ; and who can tell how long it will last ? Hast thou Momus his glasse-window , to looke into Gods secret counsell ? hast thou a key-hole to looke into Gods treasure ? canst thou stand on tiptoe , to looke over Gods shoulder, to looke into Gods decree, to see how long his patience will last ? It may be God hath suffered thee till this day, thou art guilty of ten thousand sinnes ; and yet he is patient towards thee ; God hath stayed thus long for thee, that hast sworne I know not how many oaths ; God hath borne thus long with thee that hast told I know not how many lyes , prophaned I know not how many Sabbaths , contemned I know not how many Ordinances , and sleighted I know not how many Judgements ; yet Gods patience is in his owne breast , it is the long sufferance of God. Thou maiest say I would faine have it to morrow , and this seven yeeres, but alas it is his long sufferance and not thine : and how dost thou know when he will conclude it ? it may be this day as well as to morrow , Joel. 2. 13. Rent your hearts, and not your garments , (saith the Prophet ) for the LORD he is gracious and mercifull. This word [for] hath a great deale of force in it.

**F**irst, it is a descriptivum [for] he is gracious and a mercifull God: therefore rent thy heart, and let thy Soule burst within thee, that thou hast sinned against him, for he is a mercifull God, and it may be he will pardon all thy sinns and heale all thy rebellions committed against him.

**S**econdly, it is an upbraiding (for,) upbraiding thee for thy sinnes: rent thy heart therefore; why? he is a patient God: wilt thou go on in thy sinns against such a patient God? and rebell against such a loving Father, that hath loved thee with so much compassion? rent thy heart for he is patient.

**T**hirdly, it is a comfort and encouraging [for:] rent thy heart; for there is encouragement for thee to repent, give over thy sinns, and goe to the Throne of grace. For there is much mercie to welcome thee, and great patience for to bid thee come home, and abundance of grace for to incourage thee; therefore rent thy heart and come home unto the Lord, for he is patient and long-suffering.

**F**ourthly, it is a forewarning (for:) rent your hearts, for the Lord is gracious and mercifull, slow to anger, and of great kindness; yet his mercy lasteth, yea his patience



endureth, yet he hath all his attributes, and yet he is pleased to manifest the same, still tending grace and mercy unto thee. Oh! turne unto him while these endure, or else thou shalt perish for ever.

Fiftly, it is a threatning [for:] now he is gracious, now he is mercifull; but his mercy will end, his patience will end, and then if thou hast not rent thy heart before, it will be too late then. Therefore as ever thou lovest thine own soule, now rent thy heart, and turne unto God.

It is Gods own proclamation; The Lord, slow to anger, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and sin. Yea what man soever he be, that humbles his soule before him; he shall find grace and mercy with him, yea abundance of mercie, pardoning iniquity, transgression and sinne: yea any thing.

Let but a soule come prostrate before him, humbling his soule, he will pardon his sinne. But as it followeth in the words; He will by no meanes cleare the guiltie; if notwithstanding all Gods patience and mercie, thou goe on in thy sinnes, the Lord will never forgive thee, but will visit thy sinnes upon thee unto the third and fourth generation, because thou hast withstood the day of grace.

Beloved



Beloved, men run on in their sins, as if so be an Angel from heaven should cry unto them, and tell them, yet God will be good unto them, yet God will shew them mercy, and forbear them. Beloved, let your consciences answer, if you ever heard the Lord God say to any of you, thus long I will forbear you. No, Gods patience is in his own breast, and therefore no man knows how long it will last.

Reas. 2. A second reason is, because Gods patience giveth no marks or inkling of it, before it ends: commonly when God strikes a man with death, he giveth some signes, or warnings of it before, as sicknesse and paines, and gray hairs, and many sorrows, &c. Now because thy life is in Gods hands, thou carest not for it, but venturest to goe on in thy sins, hoping to have some warning though thousands be cut off without it; but the day of grace may come to an end, and yet thou never have any inkling or warning of it beforehand: commonly when God strikes a man with death, he tells him of it beforehand by aches and pains, as if the Lord should say, Now thou shalt die, now will I take thee out of the world, But when the Lord taketh away the day of grace from a man, though the spirituall man may take

some notice of it, yet there is no sensible apparition of it, but after the day of grace is set upon a man, he may be as strong and lustie as before, he may come to Church as well after as before, performe religious duties, and do many good things, as well after as before; as Saul went on in duties of Religion, as well after Samuel had pronounced the Lords dome upon him, how many times was he offering sacrifice unto the Lord after the Prophet told him, that he was a man rejected; how many good speeches came from him; as when Samuel met him, he salutes him with these words; Blessed be thou of the Lord, I pray thee turne againe with me, that I may worship the Lord. A man would have thought that Saul had beene a good convert. No, no before al this his judgment and dome was set upon him; God steales upon him and saies nothing; he claps his plague upon their souls and holds his peace.

Isaih. 42. 14. I have a long time held my peace, I have beene still, and refrained my selfe; now will I cry like a travelling woman, I will destroy, and devoure at once. The Lord shewes here how he deales with men, they goe on in their sinnes, but the Lord holds his peace; they provoke him every day, but the Lord restraines his  
anger

anger: but now all at once his wrath breaketh forth upon them, Psal. 64. 7. God will shoot an arrow at them suddenly, their stroke shalbe at once, The Lord suddenly shoots a swift arrow at thee no sooner it is shot, but it enters into thy bowels. When the Lord comes upon a man, he comes suddenly; when he ends the day of grace upon him, he doth it suddenly. He ended the day of grace on the Scribes and Pharisees even in the very Sermon time, While Christ was preaching unto them, they were delivered up to hardnesse of heart: so many were delivered up to hardnesse of heart in the time of Hosea's prophesie, Hosea 4. 17. Epharaim is joyned to idols, let him alone (saith God:) as if he should say, Sermon, let him alone; Preacher, let him alone; Spirit, let him alone; Christ, let him alone, let him alone; Beloved, if we stand out against God, and reject the day of grace, the Lord may say, Word, let such a man alone, and never convert him; Christ, let such a man alone, and never redeeme him; Spirit let such a man alone; and never sanctifie him; Sacraments, let such a man alone and never seale up any comforts unto him; a fearefull signe that men are come to this

hours; do we not see that men come to the Word; and the Word lets them alone in their sins; do not men come to the Sacrament, and the Sacrament leaves them still in their filthinesse: men come unto god duties, but god duties let them alone, and do them no good: and this is the condition of many thousands in the world. Therefore oh thinke upon this you that have made a league with your sinns, and an agreement with hell: hear this delivered to you this day, that the day of grace may be ended, and God may come and claphis curse upon men, and never give them any inkling of it at all.

A third Reason is, because God reckons upon every hour, if God kept not a strict account of time, how many Sermons you have had, how many mercies you have enjoyed how many crosses he hath warned you by: if God kept not a true talle and account of every houres time; you might rub on many dayes, and moneths, and yeres, and spend much time in fulfilling of your lusts, but God keepeth a reckoning of these things. yea of every hour, and of every minute. Act. 17. 30. The times of ignorance God regarded not; but now he admonisheth all men to repent. Alas when men live in their sins through

through blindnesse and ignorance, and know not God, the Lord takes no such strict notice of them, but lets them goe on longer and longer; but when the Lord send them his Word and Gospel, and affords them the meanes of grace, he doth the more strictly looke unto them, and takes the more exact account of them before they had the meanes of grace, the Lord winked at them, and did not so narrowly watch them, but looked over mens ignorance, (as the originall hath it) but now God sends his Word and Gospel, he admonisheth all men to repent, he winks at never an houre, but sets downe how oft thou hast had exhortation from thy Minister, how often thou hast had warning by sicknesse and afflictions, how often thou hast had cheeke from thine owne conscience, how many admonitions thou hast had from thy friends, how many times thou hast had the sound of the Gospel to sound in thy eares to bring thee home unto God, John 2. 7. 11. This is the first beginning of miracles that Jesus did, John 4. 58. This is the second miracle that Iesus did, saith the Text, God sets downe, this is the first, this is the second time: This is the second Epistle I wrote to you saith Paul. Oh this is the third

third time I wrote unto you, 2 Cor. 13. that when I come I will not spare: so God sets it downe in his catalogue, this is the first time that I have warned this man, this is the second time, this is the third time, that when I come I will not spare; the Lord counts how long he hath sought unto thee, and intreated thee by his mercies, how long he hath allured thee by his Word, how long he hath warned thee by his judgments, how oft he hath smote thy heart with feares, and thy conscience with terrours. Now if for all this thou wilt not returne, just is it with God to cast thee downe to hell for ever.

The fourth Reason, and last: it is a Wonder that the day of grace is not ended already, and that thou art not now in hell, When a thing in this kind is looked for to be done, it is a wonder that it is not done: it is a wonderful mercie of God unto this Kingdome that yet the day of grace is continued amongst us, in regard of our long feare and expectation of the contrary. For from the highest to the lowest we have highly revolted more and more, and provoked God to his very face. What contempt of Gods Word: what neglect of Gods Ordinances

ces: what prophanation of Gods Sabbath: what scoffing and deriding of Gods servants: how doth wickednesse and prophanenesse stand up into the highest roome, climbe up into the highest chambers: But as a whore condemned to die being with childe is reprimed for a time, untill her childe be brought forth: so this Land hath gone a whoring from God, yet so long as God hath some children to be brought forth, which are not yet come unto the birth, he lets his grace and Gospel continue untill these children be brought forth. Therefore now (beloved) if we stick at the birth and come not forth, an hundred to one but we shall miscarry.

When Christ comes first to thy soule, he witnesseth grace and mercy to thee, if thou wilt repent and amend; yea he witnesseth forgiveness of sinnes, redemption, and salvation, if thou wilt beleve; but if not, he will be a swift witnesse against thee, Malachi. 3. 5. if thou continue and goest on in thy sinnes: Agree with thine adversary, while thou art in the way quickly, Matthew 5. 25. Now God is in the way with thee, Christ and his Spirit are in the way with thee; thou needest not now say, Who shall go up to heaven and



and bring downe the Spirit to thee; Christs Spirit is now knocking at thy heart, and now God offers this mercy to thee, now thou art in the way, now he calls unto thee to accept of his mercy, now he commands thee to take Christ, now heare him, calling to thy heart, now he tenders, grace unto thee imbrace it; now receiue Christ and make up thy peace with him; remember the saying of the Apostle 2. Corinthians 13. 5. Examine your selves whether you be in the faith prove your selves. Know you not your owne selves, how that Iesus Christ is in you except you be reprobates? As if the Apostle should say, I have bene an Apostle to you this yeere and halfe. I have preached thus and thus long unto you, I have wrote one Epistle to you to reforme those abuses that were among you: and now I write this second Epistle, to declare the whole will and counsell of God to you. Now cast up your reckoning, examine your selves, and make up your account: see if you have gained Christ. O! I have Christ, (saith one) I have Christ, (saith another.) I but proue it, saith the Apostle, and try your selves: know ye not that by this time Christ is in you, or else you be reprobates?

As

As if he should say, if yet Christ bee not in you, and grace wrought in your hearts, if yet you lye festring in your sinnes, and go one in your wicked wayes, it is to be feared you are reprobates: either you or we are reprobates, you for not obeying or wee not for delivering the truth of God unto you: But I trust that yce shall know that we are not reprobates: verse 6. God forbid that this Word should be ever spoken unto any soule in this congregation: but this let me say, is there any man here that goes on in his lusts, and in his carnall course of life, in pride, securitie, hardnesse of heart, and impenitencie, that hath not the soundnesse of grace: he hath a fearfull signe and brand of a reprobate, whose conscience is stilled: it is a fearefull signe, if he be not a reprobate before God, yet he is one that is not approved, but for the present in a wretched and miserable condition. Now is the time of grace wherein God hath spoken to your soules, remember that vengeance that is comming towards you, if it be rejected, now the Lords satlings are ready; his Oxen and Sheepe are slaine and laid upon the board; Christ is sacrificed, and his blood is shed, and the

grace

grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is tender-  
 ed to you; you that have grace, get more  
 grace, you that have no grace, get grace  
 and Christ, and take heede of neg-  
 lecting any opportunity of grace;  
 for that may come unto thee  
 in one houre, that will  
 never come  
 againe.

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*FINIS.*

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*Christian Reader,*



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